

VII. PHYSICAL PLANT INVENTORY

FACILITY INVENTORY AND INSPECTION PROGRAM

No buildings have yet been constructed at Gorges State Park, so no inventory and inspection has taken place. After facilities are constructed, the Division will include Gorges State Park in its Facility Inventory and Inspection Program (FIIP).

MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PRIORITIES

The Gorges State Park Master Plan describes the long-range acquisition and development plans for the park. The plan, developed with considerable public input, recommends developing the park in three phases. No change to the facilities proposed for construction in the master plan is recommended.

1. Phase I: Grassy Ridge Development \$10,103,783

Phase I would develop the Grassy Ridge Access and would include the major park facilities. The main park entrance and roads, visitor center, overlooks, picnic area, trailhead parking areas, primitive campsites, six group campsites with restroom facilities, a tent/trailer campground and bathhouse, ranger residence, maintenance facility and utilities are all included in Phase I. Total current estimated construction cost is \$10,103,783.

At the general management plan meeting, DPR personnel discussed the problem of funding such a costly project. Staff agreed that in many ways it was both desirable and cost-effective to construct the facilities listed above in one project, but staff also recognized the difficulty in spending so large a portion of the Division's total statewide construction funds in one park while other park units in other parts of the state also have high-priority development needs.

A \$10 million plus project might be better funded as part of a statewide bond issue that would also include other large, expensive projects such as the initial development of new park units like the Mayo River and Haw River. In the event that the Division is not able to fund Phase I development at Gorges State Park in its entirety, Phase I would need to be split into two or more projects that would be undertaken over time. Accordingly, it was recommended that construction and operations staff study Phase I to determine the most desirable and cost-effective way to divide it into multiple projects. Such a division of Phase I into multiple projects is currently being discussed and may take place in the future.

NOTE: The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) in October 2004 funded a portion of this project, awarding \$2.96 million to fund roads, parking and utilities at Grassy Ridge.

2. Phase II: Frozen Creek Access \$980,295

Phase II at Gorges State Park as described in the master plan calls for development of the Frozen Creek Access. A parking area, picnic area, primitive campsite, restroom, office and vehicle storage area, ranger residence, helicopter landing zone, bridge and utilities are included. Total estimated current cost is \$980,295.

3. Phase III: Complete Grassy Ridge \$1,624,666

The master plan development for Phase III would complete the Grassy Ridge Access. A seasonal barracks, parking expansion for trailhead, seven group campsites with restrooms, picnic area and ranger residence was recommended. The current total estimated cost is \$1,624,666.

These three projects were ranked for priority using the Division's Project Evaluation Program (PEP). The PEP is based upon objectives such as promoting public health, protecting natural resources, enhancing environmental education, increasing public accessibility, and improving the park's appearance. Using the PEP, projects across the state parks system are compared and ranked for funding priority.

Gorges State Park Project Priority List

Rank	Description	*Mean Score	Cost
1	Phase I: Grassy Ridge Development	692	\$10,103,783
2	Phase II: Frozen Creek Access	574	\$ 980,295
3	Phase III: Complete Grassy Ridge	516	<u>\$ 1,624,666</u>
	Current Total Estimated Cost		\$12,708,744

*The mean score comes from the Division's Project Evaluation Program (PEP). The PEP uses an evaluation formula to rank projects that considers four factors: the objective of the project; the justification or urgency for funding, the estimated annual number of persons (visitors and/or employees) who are affected by the project; and the project's significance, ranging from local to national. Projects are evaluated by the park superintendent, district superintendent, and division management. There are 15 objectives categorizing a project's purpose, and each project can have a primary and secondary objective.

03/04